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14 August 1970

MEMORANDUM FOR: Assistant Deputy Director for Intelligence

SUBJECT : SAC Proposal to Relieve NPIC Workload

REFERENCE : Director, DIA, Memorandum, 5 August 1970

1. In view of the advent of the [] which will increase significantly the volume of high-resolution imagery, any proposal to evaluate the balance between projected workloads and photo interpretation resources within the government merits serious evaluation. [] memorandum asks that consideration be given to reassigning certain national first- and/or second-phase reporting responsibilities to SAC's 544th ARTW.

2. One of the principles underlying first- and second-phase reporting responsibilities for USIB-tasked penetration missions processed in the ZI has been that one organization, NPIC, should be responsible as a service of common concern on a non-duplicative basis. National imagery files and all-source support data accordingly have been structured at NPIC to meet needs in these reporting areas.

3. Under present arrangements all elements of the Community look to one organization for first- and second-phase readout from USIB-tasked penetration missions. Many efficiencies flow from this arrangement. There is uniformity of standards and consolidation of supporting and all-source background data files.

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There is a single channel through which special first-phase exploitation requirements flow and there are well established means of distributing mission information. There is a direct link between first-phase readout or indexing and operational guidance for subsequent missions or for buckets which are still on orbit.

4. NPIC has well established and complex procedures for arraying the supporting all-source data needed by photo interpreters to evaluate properly and in perspective the information content of newly acquired imagery. If there are photo interpretation resources available at SAC, it would seem to be more efficient on balance to reassign those resources to NPIC than attempt to duplicate at SAC the supporting systems, the reporting channels and tasking mechanisms, and the orientation and contacts which are important attributes of the NPIC relationship with the national user community. While the advent of the [] will increase significantly the demands on photo interpretation resources, this increase is manageable and has been taken into account in current programming.

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5. There still are some uncertainties as to the magnitude of the impact which the [] will generate. Each bucket of [] will contain imagery of approximately the same area on the ground as is now contained in a KH-4 bucket. The scale and quality of the [] imagery will be much improved over that of the KH-4, and will require and afford higher confidence search by photo interpreters.

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6. The factor which gives the PI workload from the [] a new dimension is that there will be [] buckets in relatively close succession compared with two buckets in the cases of KH-4 []. In target terms, on the average about [] are now covered and read out from a medium-resolution KH-4 bucket. This is approximately the same number as is projected for a high-resolution []. By comparison, it is projected that an average of about [] will be imaged for each of the ten-day buckets from the improved [].

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7. With the exception of items of current intelligence importance, it is anticipated that some targets which now are read out in first-phase reporting can be made the object of second-phase reporting on a more routine basis than at present.

8. The Community (COMIREX) is presently revising and updating its high-resolution surveillance (CCRP) requirements. This is being undertaken largely to assist in defining more closely the relationship between [redacted] imagery collection and exploitation. The CCRP update will be completed within the next several months. At about the same time the NRO anticipates being able to provide improved simulation data of a typical [redacted] mission which would be based on the operational software which will be used with the [redacted] system. This simulation will provide, for the first time, a detailed projection of target and area coverage as it will flow from a typical mission. In particular, it will provide an indication of how target and area coverage may vary or be concentrated in various portions of the mission--that is, buckets. The combination of CCRP review and simulation data will provide NPIC and the Community with a basis for more detailed projections of the flow of first- and second-phase exploitation.

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9. I believe that the Community as a whole understands that changes in reporting methods and procedures will evolve as the mix changes from [redacted]

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10. It would be premature at the present stage to effect a change in the allocation of basic responsibilities for national first- and second-phase reporting responsibilities. It would be useful, however, to identify the magnitude of photo interpretation and supporting resources which SAC considers available for first- and/or second-phase reporting purposes if augmentation were to become necessary. Such data would assist in assessing the relative merits, if any, of reallocating resources or reallocating responsibilities in connection with the advent of the [redacted] collection system.

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cc: DD/NPIC